DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 401 920 IR 056 195

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TITLE Ohio Public Library Services to Older Adults.
PUB DATE Dec 95
NOTE 46p.; Master's Research Paper, Kent State University.
PUB TYPE Dissertations/Theses - Undetermined (040) -- Tests/Evaluation Instruments (160)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC02 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS Bookmobiles; Group Activities; Large Type Materials; *Library Extension; *Library Services; Library Surveys; *Older Adults; *Public Libraries; Tables (Data); User Needs (Information); Volunteers
IDENTIFIERS *Ohio

ABSTRACT

The public library is uniquely situated to meet the information needs of older adults and can also assist them in both finding ways to make their lives meaningful and staying in the mainstream. This study involved a mail survey of the public libraries of Ohio regarding their services for adults aged 65 and over. One hundred and eighty-four libraries reported on extension services, special resources, group activities, special services, areas of institutional support, and utilization of older adults as employees and volunteers. The most frequently reported extension service is homebound services. Large print books are considered the most common special resources and lectures are the most common group activities. Information and referral is the most frequently reported special service. Most libraries cooperate with other community organizations. Older adult services received low priority in most libraries although many libraries employed older adults and utilized them as volunteers. Results of this study were similar to those reported by national surveys done in the past. Eleven tables provide data on adult services. The survey on adult services and cover letters are appended. (Contains 10 references.) (Author/AEF)

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ED 401 920

OHIO PUBLIC LIBRARY SERVICES TO OLDER ADULTS

A Master's Research Paper submitted to the
Kent State University School of Library and Information Science
in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the degree Master of Library Science

by

Judy Nablo

December, 1995

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ABSTRACT

This study involved a mail survey of the public libraries of Ohio about their services for adults aged 65 and over. One hundred and eighty four libraries reported on extension services, special resources, group activities, and special services. They also reported on areas of institutional support and utilization of older adults as employees and volunteers. The most frequently reported extension service is homebound services. Large print books are the most common special resources. Lectures are the most common group activities. The most frequently reported special service is information and referral. Most libraries cooperated with other community organizations. Older adult services received low priority in most libraries although many libraries employed older adults and utilized them as volunteers. The results were similar to those reported by national surveys done in the past.

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INTRODUCTION

Our awareness of older adults has been increasing due to their growing numbers and their growing power. There has been a 22% increase of individuals aged 65 and over since 1980. This group included 31.2 million individuals, or 12.6% of the population in 1990. (Hales-Mabry 1993) The 1990 census revealed 12.9% of Ohio's citizens are 65 or older as compared to 9.4% in 1970 and 10.8% in 1980. (U.S. Department of Commerce) "Forecasts project that there will be 56 million Americans 65 or older in 2030. Each day 5,000 persons will become 65 and 3,400 persons 65+ will die, for a net addition of about 1,600-almost 600,000 per year." (Turock 1988)

Older adults in the United States are living longer and are healthier. Only 12% are in the workforce, half of those in part time work; thus they have more time available to pursue personal interests. Only 5% live in institutions. The median net worth of an older adult is $73,000 compared to $35,800 for the U.S. average. (Hales-Mabry 1993)

No matter what their income, employment status, living situation or health status older adults have needs (information being one of them) and problems and can make contributions to society. The public library is uniquely situated to meet the information needs of older adults and can also assist them in finding ways to make their lives meaningful and to staying in the mainstream. Hales-Mabry suggests older adults be looked at three ways in regard to their information seeking behavior.

The first of these is physiologically. For factors influencing information receipt three body systems must be addressed: seeing, hearing, and movement. Vision problems include the loss of visual acuity, the inability to

see in dim light, the inability to distinguish colors, sensitivity to glare, a narrower field of vision and the inability to shift vision between objects at varying distances from the viewer. More than half of all older adults have some degree of hearing loss; most commonly it is the inability to hear high pitched sounds as well as low. Most "slowing down" in the older adult is the result of the inability to respond to stimulus as quickly as when younger. Most elders adjust to this and the problems occur when young people in our fast paced society do not slow down to accommodate the elderly. All three of these factors affect how information is received and libraries must consider the appropriate accommodations that would need to be made to provide access.

Also impacting the receipt of information are psychological factors: cognition and personality. Hales-Mabry suggests that intellect, learning and creativity do not substantially decline with age without a pathological cause. Studies have generally shown that older adults remain generally stable in personality--their personalities remaining much the same as when they were young. These factors are particularly important when informational needs are satisfied by an individual with close ties to the older adult.

Change is a key word when looking at the sociological influences on the older adult. Change in the role in the family, moving from work to retirement, change in residence, change in how one spends one's time are all facts of life for the elderly. Again information can make a tremendous difference in how adjustment can be made to these changes. In addition the library can be a place where older adults can make a contribution.

Older adults receive information by the same means and from the same sources that the rest of society does. These sources include the mass media-books, movies, television, periodicals, radio, newspapers and computer

sources. One's spouse, family, friends, neighbors, and professionals are other sources of information. Educational institutions, religious institutions, the government and libraries are important sources of information.

The library profession and individual librarians have long been concerned about services for older adults. The movement toward provision of services to older adults began in the 1950's when the Cleveland Public Library organized the "Live Long and Like It Library Club" for adults over 60. Between 1957 and 1961 the ALA established the Adult Services Division and appointed a permanent Committee on Library Services to the Aging (later renamed Library Service to an Aging Population.) In 1987 this committee prepared "Guidelines for Library Service to Older Adults" which emphasized the importance of libraries meeting the needs of the elderly as their numbers in the population grow.

The programs and services provided by public libraries are many and varied. Outreach is provided by bookmobiles, cable TV, home delivery, books by mail, and depository collections in institutions. In the library programs include discussion groups, concerts, demonstrations, forums and so on. These programs are often brought to retirement homes and senior centers. Other libraries provide transportation. Special materials are available: large print books, books on tape, and closed-caption videos. Another important service libraries can provide is information and referral. In addition library buildings are gradually being made accessible to the physically disabled, many of whom are older adults.

This study looks at Ohio public libraries and the services they provide to older adults.

LITERATURE SEARCH

The 1980s saw an increase in the interest in library services to older adults and several studies were conducted to measure the level of those services. In addition, library professionals began to combine theories developed by gerontologists with the knowledge-base of libary and information science. The literature summarized here highlights these explorations.

Entitled "Library and Information Services for Older Adults" the entire April 1979 (V5 n2) issue of Drexel Library Quarterly was devoted to the topic. In their introductory remarks Barbara P. Casini and Joan Appel questioned "Will public libraries systems in cooperation with other libraries and social service agencies be a significant force in providing quality service for the information and leisure needs of older adults?" (Casini 1979, 1)

In her article in this issue Wendy Robinson looked at the role of the public library in meeting the psychological needs of older adults. She suggested that libraries can reduce the psychological and physical segregation, role loss, and collective stereotyped treatment. Programs addressing these problems included: creation of oral histories, the compilation, by the elderly, of an annotated list of books that would appeal to older readers, nontraditional independent study, and intergenerational activities. She also discussed the need for educational programs on the aging process for graduate schools of library science and library staff.

Materials and access were looked at by Mary Wood Fischer in her article in the issue. "Variety (in leisure reading material) is the guideline for a useful collection." (Casini, 21) Also, older people need information that will help them survive. Accessibility must be addressed in two ways: access to materials for the physically disabled and access to materials in a usable

medium. Alternative delivery systems-bookmobile, homebound service, deposit collection, books by mail and cooperative services, are the only answer to some problems.

John B. Balkema's contribution to the issue centered around interagency cooperation. He stressed two important concepts: coordinated service delivery and cooperative programming. Examples of such liaisons include: a joint information and referral service, and librarians accompanying mobile meal volunteers or making presentations at a congregate meal program.

Because many older adults "associate the library with scholarship--not with useful and accessible information" Barbara Webb suggested that libraries must find creative ways to do programming with them. (Casini, 45) She described the Baltimore County Public Library "Gray and Growing" program which included films and slide shows that were loaned to registered senior programs.

Carolyn Luck looked at the provision of Information &Referral services for older adults. They have special problems and it is important that librarians avoid stereotypes when working with them. She gives specific suggestions on how to deal with older adults and discusses relationships with other agencies.

Continuing education for older adults and the public library's contribution to it was discussed by Margaret E. Monroe. She saw three major clusters of learning in the lives of the elderly: 1. major changes: the death of significant others, management of physical limitations, how to cope with loneliness and so on, 2. tasks of adjustment: retirement, new roles and so on, 3. learning in the context of release and enjoyment. Library resources and personnel can make valuable contributions in all three areas.

This valuable issue of Drexel Library Quarterly concludes with a bibliography compiled by Bibiana Farina. Her intention was "to provide the information professional who is interested in instituting programs for older adults with literate and substantive background reading and sources of new ideas." (Casini, 83)

The proceedings of the Twenty-fifth Annual Symposium of the Graduate Alumni and Faculty of The Rutgers School of Communications, Information and Library Studies (April 9,1987) were published as Information and Aging edited by Betty J. Turock. In her introduction Turock stressed that "even as the population of the United States is 'graying', research on public library services for older adults, conducted over a three year period from 1984 to 1987, has demonstrated limited progress in the quality and quantity of services for elders since the time of the first national investigation in 1971." (Turock 1988) Her "update" will be discussed later in this paper. Diana Woodruff-Pak reviewed intelligence testing and older adults and discovered that negative stereotypes about aging and intellectual competence continue despite a new recognition that education and experience improve intellect even as a person ages. Deidre A. Kramer studied shifts in thinking as we age. She believes "When we judge elders' abilities by standards built for the young, we fail to capitalize on their unique abilities and on their wisdom." (Turock, 30) The range of thinking seniors are capable of must be considered when planning services for them. Realizing that older adults have a different information state (acquainted with a smaller portion of available information, attempting to use systems beyond their skills, and expecting information to be even less available than it is). Thomas Childers posits that the systems built to serve older adults must reflect this state and not some generalized "average" person. Coalitions were stressed by Joann F. Maslin in her article about

Information and Referral services and Jean E. Coleman in her discussion of literacy. Trish Skaptason dealt briefly with Federal funding for older-adult services.

A panel of experts in services to older adults responded to the presentations and Turock summarized their recommendations:

1. Networking to establish collaborative service delivery;
2. Education about the characteristics of aging;
3. Library sponsored programs of aging awareness; and
4. A higher priority for older adult services in the library's budget and organizational structure. (Turock, 2)

Between the years 1984 and 1987 Turock conducted a survey to update the data gathered in the 1971 National Survey of Public Library Services for Older Adults conducted by Booz, Allen, Hamilton and funded by the U.S. Department of Education in preparation for the 1971 White House Conference on Aging. She conducted the update in two phases. In phase I, begun during 1984, the 390 libraries surveyed in the earlier study were surveyed again. In addition, libraries judged to have exemplary services to the elderly were nominated by state librarians and others were included in the survey bringing the total to 618 sites. In Phase II, completed in 1987, a random sample of 540 libraries in communities with a population of 25,000 or more were surveyed to compare the nominated sample and the random sample. Older adults were those sixty five years of age and over (65+) and a service for older adults was any library offering that was specifically designed for the elderly or in which 50% or more of the participants were 65+. The instrument collected data in four broad categories: extension service, special services, group programs, special services. (Turock 1987)

Highlights of her findings include the following:

1. On the average public libraries were reaching about 7 percent of the potential elder market;
2. More urban libraries offered services although most older adults still lived in rural areas and small towns;
3. Market penetration was not much greater than it had been a decade earlier;
4. Extension services served the highest numbers;
5. Services peaked in the mid-seventies, began to dwindle in the late seventies and continued to drop;
6. Lack of funding and staff were the primary reasons given for dropping services, failing interest on the part of older adults wasn't far behind;
7. Large print books led the field of provided services; and
8. Others included: delivery to institutions, deposit collections, magnifying devices, page turners, film programs, book talks, genealogy, literacy volunteers and many others. All four categories of services showed growth.

Turock's survey also looked at organizational support. Seventy percent of the respondents gave a low priority to the development of programs and services for older adults when compared to other age groups. When the budget for services for older adults was tabulated as a percentage of the total budgets reported the total spent was found to be 1.2 % of the total compared to .4% in the earlier study. Differences in data reported made comparisons of staffing difficult; however, Turock believes progress was made in that area. It was clear that the administrative location for services to the elderly had not been formally established because 43 different locations were named by

respondents. Sixty-five percent (an increase) of the respondents reported at least one cooperative relationship with another community organization. Respondents listed 14 barriers to older adult services. Lack of funding, philosophy of service, library priorities, and transportation for elders led the list.

Turock concluded "While there has been some limited progress in public library service for older adults over the past decade, there is little evidence that they are receiving the attention they warrant, attention in keeping with the growth in the size of the elderly population and in the national interest in the aging." (Turock 1987 163,164) The focus of services has not changed much even though the population has (more healthy and mobile seniors), stereotyping continues, more cooperation is occurring, and organizational support remains low and disorganized.

In order to develop a comprehensive picture of the nature of service provision on a national level The Adult Services in the Eighties (ASE) project was undertaken by the RASD Services to Adults Committee. The project was begun in 1985 and completed in 1988. Its two components consisted of a national survey and a literature search. More than 8,000 service points representing 1,758 systems received surveys. Responses were received from 4,215 branches, for a return rate of 63%. (Van Fleet 1989) Of particular interest are the survey findings about services to older adults.

It was found that the percentage of older adults in a community made no significant impact on the services described. Turock's contention that services had not kept pace with the growth of the population of elderly was reinforced. However the ASE study did find that as a "special group" older adults did receive more programming than other groups such as job seekers and the handicapped. The only group receiving more was parents.

One hundred forty programs were described in the narrative portion of the survey. The most common was "general/varied" with consumer information considerably farther behind in second place. Other programs included book talks, memory/oral history, travel and estate/retirement. Only 1% of the programs were directed towards those with older parents.

The ASE survey found that 47% of the libraries offered services to the institutionalized or homebound. Those in retirement or nursing homes received library services more frequently than those in other institutions.

The study also looked at interagency cooperation. The most frequent cooperative programming was with state and local departments or councils on aging. The next most frequent was with retirement/nursing homes. Other cooperating agencies included: AARP, state library, elder hostel and others.

Van Fleet felt "The value of the ASE Project is in placing services to older adults into the context of other library services, as well as in providing an historical and theoretical base for analyzing older adult services in detail." (Van Fleet 1989 112) In addition she suggested that "our goals for this segment of our clientele are essentially the same as our goals for all our patrons-to provide the means for enriched leisure, the information for effective living and the opportunity for continued growth and learning throughout the entire life span." (Van Fleet 1989 113)

A study by Ling-nam Leo Ip completed in 1989 gives a close look at services to the elderly in the state of Pennsylvania. (Ip 1992) Ip contacted 100 libraries including all (50) District Library Centers/Headquarters of the state library system and 50 individual public libraries. 65 surveys were returned.

Ip sought to identify:

1. The ways in which public libraries had interpreted their responsibility to older people;
2. The amount and range of resources which had been specifically allocated to services for older people; and
3. The extent and nature of cooperation with local authorities and agencies to provide library service for older people. (Ip 1992 44)

Ip reported the following findings:

1. Most respondents (66%) reported having appointed staff members for older people;
2. Only 4.6% of the responding libraries documented policy statements concerning library services for older people;
3. Only 28% of the respondents initiated projects and programs exclusively for older people;
4. Eighty three percent of the respondents had one or more older volunteer workers;
5. Less than one third (28%) received financial support from state and local government for services to older people in the past ten years;
6. Only 9% of the respondents had trained librarians for services to older people;
7. Most respondents (94%) provided facilities and equipment specifically for older people; and
8. Libraries identified barriers and constraints in serving older people: limited budgeting, lack of staff, inadequate space, lack of public transportation, a large number of senior citizen groups in the area. (Ip 1992 41)

The Ohio Library Council has an active Task Force on Library Services to Older Adults. However, Tom McDonald, a member I spoke to, was not aware of any recent or current investigation of Ohio's public library services to older adults.

RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

This study surveyed the public libraries in Ohio listed in American Library Directory 1994-1995 and the results describe the current level of services in Ohio's public libraries to older adults (65+.) Services for older adults are those that were developed specifically for the aging or in which 50% or more of the participants were 65+.

The survey was organized in a manner similar to Turock's, designed to gather information in four broad library-sponsored service categories and data on institutional support for services to older adults.

•Extension services: Activities that increase access to materials for elders who cannot conveniently use library facilities because of impaired mobility and other barriers-book-by-mail, bookmobiles, deposit collections in nursing homes and so on.

•Special resources-Materials and adjunct equipment for those older adults who experience disabilities that interfere with the use of standard media-large print books, talking books, reading aids.

•Group programs-Activities held either within the library or in places where the aging congregate-nutrition sites, service centers, drop-in centers and homes for the aging.

•Special services-Activities targeted for older adults that amplify traditional services-information and referral, oral history, lifelong learning.

•Priority for service

•Financial support

•Staffing

•Cooperation with community organizations

•Perceived barriers to older adult services

•Older adults as library resources

The data was analyzed and conclusions drawn.

METHODOLOGY

A questionnaire was developed and mailed to 246 public libraries in Ohio. (Questionnaires were not sent to the following libraries which were listed as "public": the Cincinnati and Cleveland Regional Library for the Blind and Physically Handicapped and the staff library at the Gallipolis Developmental Center.) Ohio was selected because it has a large and growing elderly population. Ohio has several large cities but also numerous smaller communities and rural areas. This can help show the difference, if any, population makes on service. In addition, Ohio libraries have generally consistent funding and higher funding than many states. This might give them more opportunity to serve older adults. And, as a tax paying resident of the state, the author was just plain curious about what services the public libraries of Ohio provide.

The questionnaire was constructed to determine services provided for older adults and the institutional support for those programs. It consisted of

questions which allowed the respondent to indicate extension services, special resources, and group activities specifically planned for older adults or those in which 50% or more of the participants were 65+ years of age. Additional questions concerned library cooperation with community organizations and the use of older adults as employees and volunteers. The questionnaire was then sent to four individuals working as public librarians for their evaluation. Their suggestions for improvement were incorporated in the final version.

The questionnaire , accompanied by a cover letter and a stamped addressed return envelope, was sent to each public library The cover letter, written on Kent State letterhead, included the purpose of the study and its potential usefulness and assured confidentiality. The letter explained that the return envelope has an identification number on it to enable the researcher to check their name off the mailing list when the questionnaire was returned.

Two weeks later a reminder letter was sent to libraries who had not returned a survey.

DATA ANALYSIS

One hundred eighty four or 75% of the surveys were returned. Returns included: small libraries (serving a population of less than 10,000)-79; medium (serving a population 10,000-49,000)-81, and large (serving a population of 50,000 and over)-24. Many respondents did not answer every question. And despite the explanation of the project in the cover letter and the definitions (older adult=65+ years of age, service=designed for older adults or 50% or more of participants are older adults) noted on each page of the

survey, some respondents did not appear to use those definitions when answering some questions. This problem will be discussed further at specific points in this data analysis.

TABLE 1
PUBLIC LIBRARIES REPORTING (N=184)

Size	Number	Percentage
Small	79	43
Medium	81	44
Large	24	13
Total	184	100

Extension Services

Extension services are those that bring library materials to the older adult who is not able to use traditional library facilities. Impaired mobility is the primary barrier and bookmobiles, deposit collections in nursing homes, books by mail and other services help individuals overcome their limitations.

Almost all of the libraries reported providing extension services of some type. Only 12 (15%) of the small libraries do not provide extension services. Two (2%) of the medium-sized do not and all the large libraries reported providing some sort of extension service. Services to the homebound were most frequently provided with delivery to institutions in second place. Other frequently provided extension services were books/materials by mail and deposit collections at nursing homes.

TABLE 2
EXTENSION SERVICES PROVIDED BY REPORTING LIBRARIES (N=184)

Service	Small	Medium	Large	Total	%
Delivery to institutions	31	54	19	104	57
Bookmobile	---	2	1	3	2
Standard entrance	6	23	10	39	21
Hydraulic lift	1	2	3	6	3
Deposit collection	4	5	4	13	7
Senior centers	5	22	11	38	21
Senior housing	8	33	12	53	29
Nursing Homes	21	42	16	79	43
Books/media by mail	8	17	13	98	53
Homebound services	43	57	20	126	68

Special Resources

Special resources include those materials and equipment which assist individuals with disabilities that interfere with their use of standard materials. These include large print books, talking books and so on.

Were it not for large print books and talking books the reporting libraries would not have much to report. All libraries reported providing large print books and most have talking books available for their patrons. The third most common special resource is the provision of magnifying devices.

TABLE 3
SPECIAL RESOURCES PROVIDED BY REPORTING LIBRARIES (N=184)

Resource	Small	Medium	Large	Total	%
Lg print books	79	81	24	184	100
Talking books	63	61	21	145	79
Mag. devices	21	60	19	100	54
Ceiling projectors	3	2	1	6	3
Page turners	1	1	2	4	2
Kurtzweil mach	1	3	6	10	5
Telecommunication devices for the deaf	7	23	16	46	25
Closed captioned videos	4	14	5	23	13
Hearing assist equipment	4	17	10	31	17
Books on cassette	2	6	3	11	6
Assisted OPAC	1	--	1	2	1
Other	--	3	1	4	2

Group Activities

These are activities for the aged held in the library or places where older adults congregate such as senior centers, nursing homes and so on.

In this section I will report the responses given by the reporting libraries. However, the researcher must share her concern that some of the respondents did not seem to understand that their answers were to reflect only group activities for older adults, not total library programming. Some listed "story hour" under other and others circled all the numbers and added "but not just for seniors." The researcher estimates that 14 of the 79 (18%) small library responses, 10 of the 80 (13%) of the medium library responses,

and 3 (13%) of the large library responses were inaccurate in this category. Table 4 reflects the answers as given on the surveys.

Lectures and art exhibits were the most frequently reported in the library group activities followed closely by book talks and discussion groups. Some of the activities listed as "other" included: cataract screening, health fair, and intergenerational activities. Book talks lead the list of activities provided outside the library.

TABLE 4
GROUP ACTIVITIES PROVIDED INSIDE THE LIBRARY (N=184)

Activity	Small	Medium	Large	Total	%
Clubs	20	28	3	51	28
Film/video programs	10	26	5	41	22
Live artists	14	37	8	59	32
Lectures	22	39	13	74	40
Book talks	19	31	14	64	35
Disc. groups	20	35	12	67	36
Art exhibits	28	39	12	79	43
Other	9	11	1	21	16
None	29	16	6	51	28

TABLE 5
GROUP ACTIVITIES PROVIDED OUTSIDE THE LIBRARY (N=184)

Activity	Small	Medium	Large	Total	%
Clubs	8	17	2	27	15
Film/video program	5	13	1	19	10
Live artists	1	7	2	10	5
Lectures	4	22	7	33	18

TABLE 5--Continued

Activity	Small	Medium	Large	Total	%
Book talks	17	39	14	70	38
Disc. groups	3	4	4	11	5
Art exhibits	--	3	--	3	2
Other	1	3	1	5	3
None	48	27	8	83	46

Special Services

The survey also asked libraries about special services they provide to older adults. These services, such as oral history and services for older adult service providers, amplify traditional library services. Local history was the most commonly reported special service. Libraries also frequently provided information and referral and well as genealogy activities. Other special services provided included: tax assistance, Golden Buckeye (Ohio's senior citizen discount card) sign-up, and a driver refresher course.

TABLE 6
SPECIAL SERVICES PROVIDED BY REPORTING LIBRARIES (N=184)

Service	Small	Medium	Large	Total	%
Information and Referral	58	51	17	126	68
Info from on-line data bases	15	31	15	61	33
Oral history	7	15	5	27	15
Genealogy	49	59	17	125	68

TABLE 6--Continued

Service	Small	Medium	Large	Total	%
Local history	61	64	15	140	76
Bibliotherapy	1	1	4	6	3
Job information	20	41	11	72	39
Lifelong learning	5	7	--	12	7
ABE	6	21	8	35	19
GED classes	6	12	4	22	12
ESL classes	1	3	3	7	4
Literacy volunteers	16	28	8	52	29
Independ. learning program	5	2	3	10	5
Aging awareness	3	1	--	4	2
Services for OA service providers	9	22	5	36	20
Other	--	4	--	4	2

Institutional Support

This section of the survey attempted to find out the level of support a library gave to services for older adults. Several areas were examined: the level of priority various age groups were given, funding and staff allocation, cooperation with community organizations, and utilization of older adults as employees and volunteers. Libraries were also asked about constraints on their provision of services to older adults.

Priority of Service

Libraries were asked to rank the following groups as to the priority (1=highest,5=lowest) of service they receive: Preschool (less than 5 years), Children (6-12), Young Adults (13-20), Adults (21-64), and Older Adults (65+).

While the majority of libraries (small-86%, medium-90%, large-91%, total-88%) did answer this question, some felt it was "unfair" because they give all their patrons "top priority." The researcher, in those cases, gave each age group the ranking 1.

Young adults received the fewest #1 rankings (19) with Older Adults just behind them with 23. Preschoolers received three times as many #1 rankings (71) as Older Adults (23) and Children received two and a half times as many (61). If first and second rankings are combined Older Adults received the lowest priority, Children received the highest, and Preschool was in second place.

TABLE 7
PRIORITY OF SERVICE TO AGE GROUPS (N=161)

Preschool	Children	Young Adult	Adult	Older Adult
1--71	1--61	1--19	1--51	1--23
2--32	2--55	2--65	2--19	2--14
3--20	3--23	3--32	3--43	3--34
4--17	4--8	4--34	4--22	4--33
5--10	5--19	5--49	5--13	5--34

Allocation of funds

Responses were given by 185 libraries concerning the allocation of funds for services to Older Adults. One hundred twenty eight said they did not allocate funds for such services. Fifty seven allocated them in a variety of ways. All indicated they allocated money to deliver books and materials. Materials (in particular large print books) and programming were two areas

also mentioned. Five libraries indicated they allocated funds for staff who worked with Older Adults.

Only 19 libraries reported the percentage of funds they allocated to serving Older Adults. Thirteen reported they allocated less than 1% to 3% and 3 reported spending between 5% and 10%. Others reported 10% of book budget, 20% of book budget and 10% of materials.

Staff size and allocation of time

Eighty six percent of libraries reported the number of full time equivalent employees they have. Fifty two percent of the reporting small libraries have 1-5 employees, 38% have 6-10, and 8%f have 11-15. Medium-sized libraries reported 11% have 1-10 employees, 44% have 11-20 employees, 16% have 21-30 employees, and 19% have 31-55 employees. Large libraries reported 22% have 16-30 employees, 28% have 31-50 employees, 28% have 51-70 employees and 26% have 71-576 employees.

Fifty three libraries indicated the amount of staff time that was allocated to service for Older Adults. Four libraries did not allocate any staff time for this purpose. Thirty five libraries allocated between 5% and 10% and 7 allocated between 15% and 30%. Individual libraries also reported the following allocations: 3-4 hours/month, 25 hours/week, 32 hours/week, 1 part time, 1 full time equivalent, 1 full time, and 4 full time.

Departmental responsibilities

A question regarding which departments were responsible for providing services to Older Adults resulted in a wide variety of answers. Fifty one (65%)

of the small libraries did not answer or indicated that the library was too small to have departments and one or two employees did everything. Twenty three (29%) of medium libraries did not answer or indicated they did not have departments or individuals assigned to the services addressed in the survey. Two (9%) of the large libraries did not answer the question.

Because of the great variety in answers, the departments named by the reporting libraries will be grouped into clusters that seem to the researcher to be similar and not all responses will be specifically named.

TABLE 8
DEPARTMENTS RESPONSIBLE FOR SERVICES

Department	Extension services	Special resources	Group programs	Special Services
Outreach, extension, homebound, comm. service, spec. service	34	24	17	16
Public service, info services, adult, ILL	23	22	25	18
Circulation	8	4	2	3
Reference	6	6	3	13

TABLE 8--Continued

Department	Extension services	Special resources	Group programs	Special Services
Admin, Director, Main branch	6	5	11	5
Branches, branch services	3	2	4	4
Bookmobile	5	--	--	--
AV, media, technology	1	6	--	2

Utilization of Older Adults

One hundred fifty seven (85%) libraries responded to the question asking if they employed Older Adults. Fifty three said they did not employ older adults and 11 indicated that they did but did not report any numbers. Numbers of Older Adults employed were reported by 93 (51%) of the reporting libraries.

One hundred fifty one (82%) libraries responded to the question about using Older Adults as volunteers. Sixty five do not have volunteers who are Older Adults and 10 indicated that they did utilize Older Adults as volunteers but did not report any numbers. Fifty four libraries reported between 1 and 10, 12 libraries utilize between 11 and 20 and 8 reported using between 21 and 40. One library said they used over 80 volunteers who are Older Adults.

TABLE 9
LIBRARIES EMPLOYING OLDER ADULTS (N=93)

# employed	Small	Medium	Large	Total	%
1	20	10	2	32	35
2	8	17	4	29	32
3	4	10	3	17	18
4	2	6	--	8	9
5	2	4	--	6	7
5+	--	--	1	1	.01

Cooperative Efforts

The vast majority of libraries reported that they cooperated with other community organizations to provide services for Older Adults. One hundred seventy (92%) answered yes and 165 indicated the organizations they cooperated with. Most worked with senior centers, followed by nursing homes and social service centers.

TABLE 10
LIBRARY COOPERATION WITH COMMUNITY ORGANIZATIONS (N=165)

Organization	Small	Medium	Large	Total	%
Social service agencies	25	42	15	82	50
Senior centers	37	63	22	122	74
Nursing homes	46	31	22	99	60
Religious	22	23	7	52	32
Educational	19	26	8	53	32
Mental health	6	20	5	31	19
Nutrition	--	4	2	31	19

TABLE 10--Continued

Organization	Small	Medium	Large	Total	%
Fraternal	6	8	4	18	11
Union	--	4	2	6	4
Health care	13	23	9	45	27
Senior housing	5	--	--	5	3
Hist. society	1	--	--	1	.06
Clubs	--	1	--	1	.06

Constraints to Service to Older Adults

One hundred (54%) libraries reported constraints to their provision of services to older adults. Closely clustered at the top of the list were: time, money, and staff limitations. It is not clear what was meant by "staff limitations"; sometimes it was listed with "time" so it apparently did not mean limitations on a staff member's time in that case. Other respondents listed it alone or with another constraint like "money" and it that case it might mean "time." Given that possibility it appears that the reporting libraries consider time to be the major constraint to services to older adults. Three libraries stated that there were no constraints.

TABLE 11
CONSTRAINTS TO SERVICE (N=100)

Constraint	Small	Medium	Large	Total	%
Time	9	14	4	27	27
Money	--	18	9	27	27
Staff limitations	14	6	4	24	24
Space	3	7	1	11	11
Lack of community interest	5	2	--	7	7
Access problems	2	3	1	6	6
Lack of vehicle	--	1	2	3	3
Lack of library vision	2	--	--	2	2
Others provide	--	2	--	2	2
Size of service area	1	--	--	1	1
Other	1	3	1	5	5

Comparison to Turock's National Study

A brief comparison to the previously mentioned survey conducted by Betty Turock may help us understand how Ohio's public libraries' services to older adults compare. That study, conducted in 1984, had respondents from the District of Columbia and all the states except for Alaska, where 15,000 older adults account for 3.1 percent of the population.

Turock's study revealed that the provision of large print books was the most common special material made available to older adults. This was also true in Ohio. Talking books and magnifying devices were near the top of the list in both studies.

Statistics regarding extension services were very similar. Ohio libraries reported a somewhat higher rate of homebound services (68%) than Turock's sample (53%.) Turock's respondents had higher rates of deposit collections but a lower rate of books and media by mail.

Some disparity was revealed in programs offered inside and outside the library. Films and film programs were more popular with Turock's respondents both inside (33%) and outside (36%) than with the Ohio sample (inside=22% and outside=10%.) Perhaps this is a reflection of the prevalence of home video tape recorders as much as anything. Ohio libraries had much higher rates of providing art exhibits (43%) and lectures (40%) inside the library than the national sample (26% and 20% respectively.) Higher rates were also reported by Ohio libraries for book talks and discussion groups.

Ohio libraries reported much higher rates of provision of special services. It is difficult to know if this is true or if respondents mistakenly reported all services the library provided instead of those intended for older adults or utilized primarily by that population. For instance, 76% of reporting Ohio libraries indicated they provided local history; 38% of the libraries in Turock's study said they did. Sixty eight percent of Ohio reporting libraries indicated they provided genealogical services while only 39% of the libraries in the national study did so. Rates in both studies were similar in oral history and services for older adult service providers which are more clearly directed to the population being looked at.

Organizational support for services to older adults was shown to be similar in both surveys. Older adults most frequently received the lowest priority in the national survey. The same is true in Ohio. Similar patterns were found in the identification of which library unit(s) provided services to older adults. Extension and outreach were at the top of the list nationally and

in Ohio. In neither survey did libraries identify an organizational mechanism intended to coordinate such services.

The reporting Ohio libraries indicated a higher rate of cooperation with other community organizations than did Turock's respondents (92% and 65% respectively.) One other difference was that Ohio libraries cooperated most frequently with senior centers and the national sample most frequently worked with social service agencies. Again, perhaps a sign of the times.

Ohio libraries reported a somewhat higher rate of employment of older adults than the sample in the national study. Fifty seven percent of reporting Ohio libraries employ them and 52% of libraries in the national study reported they did. Forty seven percent of Ohio libraries reported using older adults as volunteers and the libraries in the national survey reported a usage rate of close to 60%.

Available funding was named as a constraint to services for older adults much more frequently by national survey respondents (95%) than by Ohio libraries (24%.) Ohio libraries reported time and staff limitations more frequently than national respondents.

Conclusions

Several concerns arise from the analysis of the data provided by this survey. Despite the increase in the numbers of older adults in American society most libraries do not seem to recognize them as a separate entity in need of distinct services. The developmental needs of preschoolers and children are recognized, given priority and assigned staff persons in most libraries. By providing large print books and books on tapes libraries meet one need of some older adults. Homebound delivery and deposit collections

acknowledge another particular need of older adults. But there seems to be scattered responsibility for these services, they receive low priority and few library systems have a specific staff person responsible for older adult programs and materials. Obviously the numerous one person rural libraries in Ohio cannot have an older adult specialist; but what a wonderful thought that medium and large libraries could. One respondent to the survey said it well when they said a constraint to providing services to older adults was "lack of vision on the part of the library."

Changes, or at least additions, would need to be made in library schools in order to create and nurture this vision. In my years in library school this researcher rarely heard mention of older adults as a particular group with unique needs that could be met by the library. In my foundations course I interviewed a branch reference librarian who said older adults were regular users of the library (there was a retirement home next door with an access road to the library.) In my management course I was a part of a group who designed a materials delivery service to the homebound and we used the population of older adults in our service area as partial justification for the program. That was about the extent of it; several courses in children's literature and services and young adult services were available. But no courses that taught about the needs of older adults that could be met by public libraries and the contributions that older adults could make to the success of a public library's mission.

One area of encouragement is that many libraries cooperate with other community agencies and are involved with extension services to a variety of institutions. This can enable librarians to learn about older adults and their needs and how the library can be involved. Shared service delivery can also

help libraries with what they consider the main constraints to services: money and time.

And so it seems that little has changed in the decades that these studies were done. Betty J. Turock found that some progress had been made in the 1980s and Ohio public libraries show higher participation rates in a few areas. But before there is any radical improvement in services to older adults there will need to be a change in perceptions, understandings, and imaginations of librarians. In addition, creative approaches will need to be taken to generate the funding necessary to begin services or expand existing services. Development and nurturing of cooperative relationships is the most likely way to succeed in provision of services to this rapidly growing population.

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SURVEY Please use the following definitions when completing the survey. Service=designed for Older Adults or 50% or more of participants are Older Adults. Older Adult=65+ years of age.

A. Which describes the population your library serves? (please circle number)
   1. Rural (less than 10,000)
   2. Suburban (10,000-49,000)
   3. Urban (50,000 and over)

I Extension Services

B. What services does your library provide? (please circle numbers or letters)
   1. Delivery to institutions
   2. Bookmobile
      a. Standard entrance
      b. Hydraulic lift
   3. Deposit collection
      a. Senior centers
      b. Senior housing
      c. Nursing homes
   4. Books and media by mail
   5. Homebound services
   6. Other (please specify)

II Special Resources

C. What special resources does your library provide? (please circle numbers)
   1. Large print books
   2. Talking books
   3. Magnifying devices
   4. Ceiling projectors
   5. Page turners
   6. Kurtzweil reading machines
   7. Telecommunication devices for the deaf
   8. Closed captioned viewing adaptors
   9. Hearing assistance equipment
   10. Other (please specify)

III Group Activities

D. Which programs does your library provide inside the library? (please circle numbers)
   1. Clubs
   2. Film/video programs
   3. Live artists
   4. Lectures
   5. Book talks
   6. Discussion groups
   7. Art exhibits
   8. Other (please specify)

E. Which programs does your library provide outside the library? (please circle numbers)
   1. Clubs
   2. Film /video programs
   3. Live artists
   4. Lectures
   5. Book talks
   6. Discussion groups
   7. Art exhibits
   8. Other (please specify)

SURVEY Please use the following definitions when completing the survey. Service=designed for Older Adults or 50% or more of participants are Older Adults. Older Adult=65+ years of age.

IV Special Services

F. Which special services does you library provide? (please circle numbers or letters)
1. Information and referral
2. Information from online data bases
3. Oral history
4. Genealogy
5. Local history
6. Bibliotherapy
7. Job information
8. Lifelong learning
   a. Adult basic education
   b. General equivalency diploma classes
   c. English as a second language classes
   d. Literacy volunteers
   e. Independent learning program
   f. Education brokering
   g. Aging awareness
9. Services for older adult service providers
10. Other (please specify)

V Institutional support

G. Indicate the level of priority of service your library gives these groups (1=highest, 5=lowest)
___ Pre school (less than 5 years)
___ Children (6-12)
___Young adults (13-20)
___Adults (21-64)
___Older adults (65+)

H. Does your library specifically allocate funds for services to older adults?
___ Yes
___ No

I. If yes, what areas? e.g., programming, materials, etc.

J. If your answer was yes, what percentage of funds?
___ %

K. How many full-time equivalent staff members does your library have?
___

L. What percentage of staff time is designated to work specifically with older adults?
___

M. What library department is responsible for providing the four categories of older adult services mentioned previously?
Extension services:_____
Special resources:_____
Group programs:_____
Special services:_____

N. Does you library cooperate with other community organizations to provide services to older adults?
___ Yes
___ No

APPENDIX 1 (2)

SURVEY Please use the following definitions when completing the survey. Service=designed for Older Adults or 50% or more of participants are Older Adults. Older Adult=65+ years of age.

O. With which of these organizations has your library cooperated? (please circle the numbers)

1. Social service agencies
2. Senior centers
3. Nursing homes
4. Religious
5. Educational
6. Mental health
7. Nutrition
8. Fraternal
9. Union
10. Health care
11. Other (please specify)

P. Please list major constraints to provision of services to older adults at your library

Q. Does your library employ any older adults?

___Yes
___No

R. How many?

___

S. Does your library have volunteers who are older adults?

___ Yes
___ No

T. How many?

___

Thank you for completing this questionnaire. Please return it in the envelope that accompanied it.

Judy Nablo
580 Midgard Road
Columbus, Ohio 43202

APPENDIX 2

School of Library and Information Science
Columbus Program
(614) 292-7746

Survey of Ohio Public Library Services to Older Adults Sept. 11, 1995

Dear Librarian:

I am a graduate student in the School of Library and Information Science at Kent State University. As part of the requirements for my master's degree I am conducting a study about public library services to older adults in Ohio. The enclosed questionnaire will help me gather data on the services being provided and the institutional support for those services. This information will be useful to both theorists and practitioners in the field of library and information science.

Confidentiality and anonymity are guaranteed because you do not need to sign your name to the questionnaire; only the investigator has access to the survey data. The number on the return envelope will enable me to remove your library's name from my list when you return the questionnaire. There is no penalty of any kind if you choose not to participate in the study or if you choose to withdraw at any time. While your cooperation is essential to the success of the study, it is, of course, voluntary. A copy of the final results of the study will be available upon request.

If you have any further questions, please contact me at (614) 262-9750 or Mary Machin, my research advisor, at (614) 292-7746. If you have any further questions regarding research at Kent State University you may contact the Office of Research and Sponsored Programs, at (216) 672-2070.

Please return the questionnaire by September 18 in the enclosed post paid addressed envelope. Completion of the questionnaire should only take a few minutes and an immediate response would be appreciated. Thank you very much.

Sincerely,

Judy Nablo

Graduate student

Judy Nablo
580 Midgard Road
Columbus, OH. 43202

124 Mount Hall, 1050 Carmack Road
Columbus, OH 43210

September 25, 1995

Dear Librarian,

Just a reminder...

About ten days ago you received a survey about your library's services to older adults. This is part of a graduate school project and your response is crucial to my success. If you need a new survey please contact me at 614-262-9750 and if you have already returned the survey you have my sincere gratitude.

Thank you for taking time out of your busy schedule to complete the survey and to mail it as soon as possible.

Sincerely,

Judy Nablo

Judy Nablo
580 Midgard Road
Columbus, Oh. 43202